



ASTROMAN

BY ALBERT BELZ

MTC MELBOURNE
THEATRE
COMPANY

Welcome



Over the course of this year our productions have taken you to London, New York, Norway, Malaysia and rural Western Australia. In *Astroman* we take you much closer to home – to suburban Geelong where it's 1984.

In this touching and humorous love letter to the 80s, playwright Albert Belz wraps us in the highs and lows of growing up, the exhilaration of learning, and what it means to be truly courageous.

Directed by Sarah Goodes and Associate Director Tony Briggs, and performed by a cast of wonderful actors, some of them new to MTC, *Astroman* hits the bullseye

of multigenerational appeal. If ever there was a show to introduce family and friends to theatre, and the joy of local stories on stage – this is it.

At MTC we present the very best new works like *Astroman* alongside classics and international hits, from home and abroad, every year. As our audiences continue to grow – this year we reached a record number of subscribers – tickets are in high demand and many of our performances sell out. Subscriptions for our 2019 Season are now on sale and offer the best way to secure your seats and ensure you never miss out on that must-see show. To see what's on stage next year and book your package visit mtc.com.au/2019.

Thanks for joining us at the theatre. Enjoy *Astroman*.

Brett Sheehy AO
Artistic Director & CEO

Virginia Lovett
Executive Director & Co-CEO

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, the First Peoples of Country on which Southbank Theatre and MTC HQ stand, and we pay our respects to all of Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.

MTC is a department of the University of Melbourne.



MTC is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the State Government of Victoria through Creative Victoria.



MTC is a member of Live Performance Australia and the Australian Major Performing Arts Group.



MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

ASTROMAN

BY ALBERT BELZ

27 OCTOBER – 8 DECEMBER

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

— About the play —

For a troubled but brilliant teenager in 1980s Geelong, the world is a small place. Thirteen-year-old Jiembra Djalu and his brother Sonny are the new kids in town, and while Jiembra may be a video game whizz and maths genius, he's always getting into strife. A friendship with the owner of the local arcade and a chance at gaming glory could see his life changed forever, but could also mean leaving behind what matters most – his brother and adoring mother.

— Cast —

Michelle Djalu Elaine Crombie

Mick Jones Nicholas Denton

Jiembra Djalu Kamil Ellis

Natalie Djalu / Mrs Taylor Tahlee Fereday

Mr. Pavlis Tony Nikolakopoulos

Sonny Djalu Calen Tassone

Composer & Sound Designer Jethro Woodward

Associate Sound Designer Tom Backhaus

Breakdance Teacher Aaron Vidot

Video Designer Jamie Clennett

Fight Choreographer Lyndall Grant

Set & Costume Design Secondment

Jeremy Pryles

Stage Manager Christine Bennett

Assistant Stage Manager Brittany Coombs

Stage Management Secondment

Lucie Sutherland

Rehearsal Photographer Deryk McAlpin

Production Photographer Jeff Busby

— Creative Team —

Director Sarah Goodes

Associate Director Tony Briggs

Set & Costume Designer Jonathon Oxlade

Lighting Designer Niklas Pajanti

For information regarding running time, please see a member of the Front of House team.

Media Partners

TimeOut

THE RRR

Cover Photo:
Justin Ridler

Astroman received
development assistance
from Playwriting Australia

By arrangement with

NEW ZEALAND PLAYWRIGHTS
PLAYMARKET
AGENT, ADVISOR, BOOKSHOP

A love letter

From the playwright, Albert Belz

With great respect, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land,
the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation and
pay respect to their Elders, past and present.

*Kia ora,
Ko Hikurangi toku maunga,
Ko Waiapu toku awa,
Ko Horouta toku waka,
Ko Ngati Porou me Nga Puhi toku iwi,
Ko Ngati Pokai toku hapu,
Kaiwaka te marae,
Ko Albert Belz toku ingoa.*

Love letters were made to be seen –
Astroman has always been my love letter
to the 80s, the era that I grew up in.

You might have guessed from the above
introduction that I'm Maori. While living in
New Zealand (Aotearoa) I wrote the outline

for this piece, it was set in a coastal town
in Aotearoa. And then I moved to Australia
with my partner in 2011, whereupon I forgot
about this piece since we were both too
busy settling into our new lives in our new
hometown – Geelong.

After a year-and-a-half of living in Geelong
we moved to Melbourne where I somehow
found time to write again. I picked up the
old outline for *Astroman* and was reminded
about all the good vibes that buzzed around
it for me. So, I started researching and
writing the first draft of *Astroman*, except
I relocated the story to a place and to a
people that had left such an indelible
mark on my life – Geelong.

When I finished it, Playwriting Australia
really liked it and I got the wonderful
opportunity to workshop it with a mob up
in Sydney. Again, thanks to Playwriting
Australia it went on to get a public reading
at the Australian Playwrights Festival in
Adelaide 2015 where the piece really
discovered its heart – and flew.

The piece is more than just a love letter
though, *Astroman* is a story about patterns
and growth. It's about acknowledging the
patterns in our lives, good and bad. It's
about discovering the bravery to dare to
break the patterns that could destroy us
– especially if we're on our last life. Also,
it's about embracing the kaleidoscope ►



(Above) Tahlee Fereday; (opposite) Elaine Crombie (obscured)
Calen Tassone, Nicholas Denton and Kamil Ellis



'It's about embracing the kaleidoscope of patterns that bring colour, opportunity, growth and love into our lives.'



of patterns that bring colour, opportunity, growth and love into our lives.

My partner and I have since moved back to Aotearoa, but in doing so we both left much of our heart in Geelong and Melbourne – the cities that added so much colour, growth, love and opportunity to our lives. I hope you get a real sense of this upon experiencing *Astroman*.

After the public reading in Adelaide, there was much interest from various companies around Australia including Melbourne Theatre Company. However, *Astroman* eventually ended up at the bottom of my

drawer gathering dust in Auckland for a couple of years. So, I must thank Sarah Goodes, Chris Mead and all the other fantastic people at MTC who eventually found an opportunity for me to get *Astroman* out of the bottom drawer. Together with my New Zealand agent Playmarket, they sorted all the necessary details out, and here we are, because love letters were made to be seen.

I dearly hope you enjoy this story –
‘To the future and beyooooond!’

Albert Belz, September 2018 ■

(Above, left to right) Tony Nikolakopoulos, Calen Tassone (obscured), Tahlee Fereday, Kamil Ellis, and Elaine Crombie;
(opposite from top) Elaine Crombie; Kamil Ellis



History repeating

For Associate Director Tony Briggs, *Astroman* brings back memories of his childhood in 1980s Australia.



There were a few things that struck Tony Briggs after reading *Astroman*. He liked that it was funny and not too earnest, but also that the story had a big heart.

However, what impacted Briggs most were the similarities he shared with the play's protagonist, Jiembra Djalú, growing up in 1980s Australia.

Briggs's story differs from Jimmy's in that he was older, and already at boarding school, at Scotch College in Hawthorn, when Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean* came out. He remembers the moment distinctly, walking into the boarding house common room and seeing the King of Pop glide across the screen first thing in the morning. Briggs also remembers the day Prince's *Purple Rain* dropped, as clearly as he remembers trips to the arcade on school holidays.

Amongst a montage of colourful nostalgia, the first workshop of *Astroman* evoked memories of the childhood conflict Briggs experienced when his parents encouraged him to leave home in pursuit of a better education. But travelling to Melbourne meant leaving his family and friends in North Richmond on the tranquil Hawksbury River, NSW. It was an opportunity, spearheaded by his Aunt Hyllus Maris, and Briggs felt the pressure of the adults around him.

'I was 12 at the time and I genuinely believed I was being sent to a boys' prison,' he said. North Richmond was a country town in those days and Briggs spent his childhood in a place he describes as paradise. 'There were no estates back then. It was just farm land and my playground was the river.' Trading the Hawksbury for Hawthorn's

(From top) Tony Nikolakopoulos; Elaine Crombie and Tahlee Fereday; Nicholas Denton, Calen Tassone and Kamil Ellis
(Opposite) Associate Director Tony Briggs with Director Sarah Goodes

polluted stretch of the Yarra was less than ideal, Briggs remembers. ‘But I went and I survived the first year, and then I chose to go back the year after that, and the year after that, until I finished.’

Briggs is not sure he would send one of his three children to boarding school today, unless they explicitly asked, he says. However, he can’t deny the pathways and opportunities that his independent school education provided. ‘I had more at my disposal, and I used that to my advantage.’

It was at Scotch College, under the tutelage of drama teacher Ian Harrison that Briggs did his first ever production, *Kiss Me, Kate*, performing alongside current Lord Mayor Sally Capp, no less. However, the performing arts spell had been cast on him much earlier in life. Briggs grew up surrounded by music and storytelling. His mother and aunts, including his Aunt Hyllus, were The Sapphires, which Briggs based his 2004 play for MTC on, and the film of the same name, which followed eight years later.

Briggs started acting professionally from the age of 18. However, his louder calling as a young adult was on the track and field. He left Hawthorn after school, this time to attend the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, as the first Aboriginal track and field scholarship recipient. He competed nationally in the 110m hurdles, 400m sprint, and later stepping up to the 400m hurdles, where he became a three-time national medalist. ‘I was training for the Olympics, that was my plan. To go to the Olympics, ►



then immediately retire from athletics and play professional rugby, which was actually always my first love.'

'I loved it, but I was also just listening to the adults around me, who told me to do the thing I was good at. I was fit and healthy and young and it did give me focus and discipline, which I think I've been able to carry with me into other endeavours.' But somewhere along the way, Briggs's attention shifted and he could only think about performing.

'I remember the big turning point for me, I was lining up for a heat at the National Championships and on paper I should have won that heat. But I was thinking about a role I'd auditioned for in a film a week earlier.' Briggs ended up coming fourth in that race and ran a below par time; the first time he'd failed to make the finals in a heat. And he knew in that moment it was time to hang up the spikes. Briggs got the part in the film and never looked back.

After the ground-swelling success of his play and subsequent film, *The Sapphires*, Briggs and his family relocated to East Gippsland, away from the chaos that consumes so much of city life. But Briggs admits, it took him off the grid a little.

In 2018 though, he has pivoted again, and now wants to focus his attention on directing. Despite his multiple acting commitments in 2019 (Briggs appears in *Storm Boy* and *Black is the New White* for MTC next year), the fact he's in the middle of creating a major TV series, and ►



(Back, left to right) Kamil Ellis, Nicholas Denton, Tahlee Fereday, Elaine Crombie and (lying down) Calen Tassone





Kamil Ellis and Tony Nikolakopoulos

touring an entirely new production of *The Sapphires* in 2019/20, Briggs is keen to learn the trade of directing, and *Astroman* felt like the perfect place to start.

‘The thing that’s special about the *Astroman* rehearsal room, and I know this is clichéd, but there’s an ease in the room. It really does feel like a family in there.’

‘We’re approaching the end of rehearsals so everyone is mentally and physically tired. Every now and then the energy levels flat line, but the nature of the show is that there is a lot of laughter, so we always pick back up again.’

Working alongside MTC Associate Director Sarah Goodes has shed light on the craft of directing, Briggs says. ‘She sees the story as a whole, then dissects it and lays it out like a jigsaw puzzle. It’s been so easy to work with Sarah.’

Briggs says he’d like to think he’s helped alleviate some of the creative problem solving in the room and offered another unique perspective on what direction the production should go in.

But in terms of a contribution he knows he’s provided, that would be his lived experience. Growing up as an Aboriginal boy in 1980s Melbourne at boarding school. ‘Yeah, I know I’ve done that,’ he says chuckling, ‘And I know that helps the cast understand the world of our main character, Jiembra Djalu.’ ■



Go online to see the full gallery of production and rehearsal images.
mtc.com.au/backstage

Creative Team



ELAINE CROMBIE

Michelle Djalu

Elaine Crombie is a Pitjanjatjarra, Warrigmay, South Sea Islander and German descended woman and proud mother of two brilliant sons. An actor, director, singer, songwriter, stand-up comedian, writer and proud MEAA member, Elaine's theatre credits include: *The Sunshine Club*, *Fountains Beyond*, *An Octoroon* (Queensland Theatre); *Bloodland*, (Bangarra with STC); *Conversations With the Dead*, *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* (Belvoir); *Cherry Pickers*, *Blackie Blackie Brown* (STC); *Blaque Showgirls* (Malthouse Theatre). Television productions include: 8MMM Aboriginal Radio, *How to Stay Married* (Brindle Films/Princess Pictures); *Redfern Now* - Season 1 (Blackfella Films); *Black Comedy* - Season 2 (Scarlett Pictures); *Top of the Lake: China Girl* (See-Saw Films); *Kiki and Kitty* (Porchlight Films); *Rosehaven* - Season 2 (What Horse? Productions); *Grace Beside Me* (Magpie Pictures); *Nowhere Boys* - Season 3 (Matchbox Pictures). Film productions include: *Jackie Jackie* (Scarlett Pictures); *Black Talk*, *Top End Wedding* (Goalpost Pictures).

I am a passionate advocate of truthful storytelling and I endure to be a champion and inspiration to my past, present and future Aboriginal, South Sea Islands and Torres Strait Island and wider communities.



NICHOLAS DENTON

Mick Jones

Melbourne born actor Nicholas Denton was previously seen at Melbourne Theatre Company as Andrew in *Wild*. Before that he appeared as Charlie Bucktin in the critically acclaimed production of *Jasper Jones*, which was remounted at Queensland Theatre earlier this year. Nicholas's other theatre credits include: *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (Monster Media); *Smoking Joe*, *Cowboy Mouth* (Old 505, Sydney); *Love Song* by John Kolvenbach (Melbourne Fringe), *The Glass Menagerie* (Melbourne Fringe); *The Sugar Syndrome* (The Kings Collective); *Out of Gas On Lovers Leap* (Gasworks Arts Park) and *Monologue for a Murderer* (La Mama Theatre). In television, Nicholas has appeared in *Glitch* Season 1 and 2 (Matchbox Pictures/Netflix) and performances on film include *Holding the Man*, *Kath and Kimberella* and recent horror film *The Unlit*. Nicholas was also the recipient of the Best Actor Award (*Rabbit*, 2015) at the St Kilda Film Festival.



KAMIL ELLIS

Jiembra Djalu

Kamil Ellis is thrilled to return to Melbourne Theatre Company for *Astroman*. Kamil's MTC debut in 2017 was for the production of *Macbeth*. Previous stage credits include *The Secret River* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Terrarium* (NIDA). TV credits: *Bushwacked Bugs* (ABC/Mint Pictures); *Deep Water* (Blackfella Films); *Nowhere Boys 3* (Matchbox Pictures); *Cleverman* Season 1 & 2 (Goalpost); *Dance Academy* (Werner Film); *My Place* (ABC TV). Kamil is a 19 year-old Wiradjuri boy who has been performing traditional song and dance since the age of two. Kamil's not-so-secret passion is to obtain his pilot's licence.

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Creative Team



TAHLEE FEREDAY

Natalie Djalal / Mrs Taylor

Tahlee Fereday is a 2017 graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). Before her studies she was based in Darwin, where she hosted *The Breakfast Show with Tahlee* on Larrakia Radio 94.5FM. This year Tahlee has worked with creatives such as Andrew Bovell, Patricia Cornelius, Christos Tsiolkas, Melissa Reeves, Irine Vela and Susie Dee. She has also worked with companies such as, Malthouse Theatre, Arena Theatre Company and Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP). Most recently, she played Martha in *Fallen* at fortyfivedownstairs with She Said Theatre (dir. Penny Harpham). Tahlee has worked with MTC this year in *Cybec Electric* (dir. Luke Kerridge and Prue Clarke) and *First Stage* (dir. Sapidah Kian) and is excited to make her debut in a mainstage MTC production.



TONY NIKOLAKOPOULOS

Mr Pavlis

Making his MTC debut in *August: Osage County*, Tony Nikolakopoulos has appeared on stage in *Hamlet*, *The Spook* (Malthouse Theatre), *Roulette* (Ranters Theatre, including a season in Portugal), *Court Yard of Miracles* (State Theatre Company of South Australia), *Honeymoon in Hellas* (Kali Techni), and *Waiting for Godot* (ACT 7). He has directed over one hundred productions for Stage School Australia and taught Drama at Deakin University and is currently teaching at VCA. Among Tony's many television appearances are *Wentworth*, *Please Like Me*, *All Saints*, *Pacific*, *Underbelly*, *Pirate Island*, *Killing Time*, *The Time of Our Lives*, *Fat Tony & Co*, *Reef Doctors* and *Little Oberon* (telemovie). Some of his feature film credits include the highly acclaimed *Alex and Eve*, *The Independent*, *The Extra*, *Tom White*, *The Wannabes*, *Kangaroo Jack*, *The Wog Boy*, *Head On*, *Legend Maker*, *West of Sunshine* and *Joe Cinque's Consolation*. He has also appeared in many short films including *296 Smith St* where he received a performance excellence award.



CALEN TASSONE

Sonny Djalal

Calen Tassone is a young talent from the Pilbara, Western Australia. *Astroman* marks Calen's debut with Melbourne Theatre Company. Other theatre credits include *Conversations with the Dead* and *Confessions of a Pyromaniac* with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company; and the national tour of *Sugarland* (ATYP). Calen has recently finished shooting the Matchbox Pictures television serial *The Heights* for the ABC. Prior to this, he appeared in the ABC's *Black Comedy Series 2* (Scarlett Pictures). While studying at the International Screen Academy, he won the role of 'Taylor Pete' in the Kriv Stender's directed feature *Red Dog: True Blue* (Roadshow Films).

Creative Team



ALBERT BELZ

Playwright

Albert Belz's career originally began as an actor before writing for stage and screen. An award-winning international playwright and screenwriter, his works have crossed many datelines and divides. They've been performed internationally from London to Paris to New York & Sydney. Themes of class, ethnicity and sexual politics, to Gothic serial killers and religion resonate through his words. Belz has held writing residencies in Les Quesnoy (Northern France) and both Waikato and Victoria Universities NZ. This year he worked with Auckland Theatre Company to translate Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* which saw a highly successful run at the ASB Waterfront Theatre. Also this year, his play *Cradle Song* – a horror set in South West Ireland – opened to much critical acclaim as part of the Koanga Festival in Auckland. His latest television comedy series *Tongue Tied* (Greenstone Pictures) is currently screening on New Zealand Television. Belz lectures in performing arts and writing for stage & screen at Manukau Institute of Technology. He is currently the Writer in Residence at Canterbury University, NZ.



SARAH GOODES

Director

Melbourne Theatre Company Associate Director Sarah Goodes last directed *A Doll's House, Part 2, The Children* which won three Helpmann Awards including Best Director and Best Production, and Joanna Murray-Smith's *Three Little Words* for MTC, following her critically acclaimed direction of *John*. This year she directed *The Sugar House* at Belvoir Theatre in Sydney. Sarah's reputation as a leading director of new Australian and international work has been built on wide-spread praise and multiple award nominations. Formerly Resident Director at Sydney Theatre Company, Sarah directed *The Hanging, Disgraced, Orlando, Battle of Waterloo, The Effect, Vere (Faith), The Splinter, and Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness*. Her other directing credits include *Elling, Black Milk, The Sweetest Thing, and The Small Things* (B Sharp Belvoir); *The Colour of Panic* (Sydney Opera House); *Vertigo and the Virginia, The Schelling Point, Hilt, and What Happened Was* (Old Fitzroy Theatre); and *The Unscrupulous Murderer* *Hasse Karlson Reveals the Gruesome Truth about the Woman Who Froze to Death on a Railway Bridge* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company). In 2015 she was the recipient of the Gloria Payten Travel Scholarship.



TONY BRIGGS

Associate Director

Tony Briggs is a Yorta Yorta/Wurundjeri (Woiwurrung) creative who has worked as an actor in theatre, film, and television for many years. His performing credits include roles for Melbourne Theatre Company and many other theatre companies throughout Australia. Tony will be appearing in two MTC productions in 2019; *Storm Boy* (with Queensland Theatre) and *Black is the New White* (with STC). The writer of the 2005 Helpmann award winning MTC production of *The Sapphires*, Tony is directing a new national 2019 and 2020 touring version of this popular story. *Astroman* is Tony's directorial debut for Melbourne Theatre Company.

Creative Team



JONATHON OXLADE
Set & Costume Designer

Jonathon has designed for Windmill Theatre Co, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir, Queensland Theatre, The Last Great Hunt, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Barking Gecko, Arena Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Vitalstatistix, Aphids, The Escapists, The Border Project, LaBoite Theatre, Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Festival, Adelaide Festival, Asia TOPA, STCSA, Malthouse Theatre and Performance Space. For Melbourne Theatre Company, *Big Bad Wolf* (Windmill Theatre Co) and *Boy Girl Wall* (The Escapists). He is currently Resident Designer at Windmill Theatre Co. His film work includes *Girl Asleep* and has illustrated the picture book *The Empty City* for Hachette Livre/Lothian Books. Jonathon has received Matilda Awards for Best Design – *A Christmas Carol* and *Attack of the Attacking Attackers*, PAWA Award – Best Costume *The Irresistible*, Sydney Theatre Award – Best Costume for *Mr Burns*, APDG Award – Best Production Design and Best Costume *Girl Asleep*, ACCTA Award - Best Costume *Girl Asleep*, Lord Mayor's Fellowship to attend Prague Quadrennial of Scenography and Architecture, and a Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship in 2016. Jonathon trained at Queensland College of Art and Kid Praha (Czech Republic).



NIKLAS PAJANTI
Lighting Designer

For Melbourne Theatre Company Niklas has designed the lighting for *A Doll's House, Part 2*, *Rupert*, *Australia Day* (with STC), *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Beast*, and *Queen Lear*. Other theatre credits include *When the Rain Stops Falling*, *Spring Awakening*, *I Want to Dance Better At Parties* (STC); *One Night the Moon*, *Not Like Beckett* (Malthouse Theatre); *Angels in America*, *Wild Duck*, *Babyteeth*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Pillowman* (Belvoir); *Sunday in the Park with George* (Victorian Opera). His dance credits include *Specktra*, *Dust* (Dancenorth) *Complexity of Belonging*, *An Act of Now*, *Black Marrow 247 Days*, *Singularity* (Chunky Move); *Piece for Person and Ghetto Blaster* (Nicola Gunn); *The Collapsible Man*, *Appetite* (KAGE). Exhibitions include *Wonderland*, *Game Masters*, *Star Voyager: Exploring Space on Screen* (ACMI) *Tim Burton The Exhibition* (MOMA), *Hollywood Costume* (V&A Museum). Niklas has won two Green Room Awards, a Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Award and has received 10 Green Room Award nominations.



JETHRO WOODWARD
Composer & Sound Designer

Jethro Woodward is a Melbourne-based composer, musical director, arranger, musician and sound designer recognised for his expansive and highly-layered film, theatre and dance scores. A multi Green Room Award winner and Helpmann nominee, he has worked with some of Australia's leading major and independent companies including; Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Opera Victoria, Chamber Made Opera, Back to Back Theatre, Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin, Australian Dance Theatre, Aphids, Stuck Pigs Squealing, Rawcus, KAGE and more. For MTC works include: *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Life Without Me*, *Clybourne Park*, *The Seed*, and *The Heretic*. Jethro regularly tours his work internationally and has won Green Room Awards for his work on *Song for a Weary Throat* (Rawcus), *For The Ones Who Walk Away* (St. Martins Youth Theatre), *The Bloody Chamber* (Malthouse Theatre), *Moth* (Malthouse Theatre/Arena Theatre Company), *Goodbye Vaudeville* *Charlie Mudd* (Malthouse Theatre/Arena Theatre Company) and *Irony Is Not Enough* (Fragment 31).

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Indigenous Scholarship Program



Malyan Gilbert, Lead Teaching Artist: Lenka Vanderboom, Tamia Blackwell, Caitlyn Gerada, Janet Galpin, Nomi Haji-Amad, William Pepper, Jayde Hopkins, Sarah Maher, Corey Brunskill-Saylor, Jyden Brailey and Joshua Vickery-Stewart.

Now in its fourth year, MTC's Indigenous Scholarship Program offers a unique learning opportunity for young First Peoples interested in a career in the performing arts.

In 2018 nine participants from across the country are taking part in the program, with recipients hailing from Darwin, Perth, Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne and regional Victorian towns Stawell, Kinglake and Bendigo.

Through a series of workshops exploring performance skills, script writing and traditional dance, the group work together to devise a short performance to be presented at the end of the year at Southbank Theatre.

Over the course of the program, the participants also experience a variety of live performances

and cultural experiences, and have the opportunity to meet a range of industry professionals and community leaders to learn more about potential career pathways.

MTC Executive Director Virginia Lovett said, 'Our Indigenous Scholarship Program is a key program in our education portfolio and this program has grown from strength to strength. It is wonderful to welcome another nine scholarship recipients to MTC. This program is all about opening up opportunities, breaking down barriers and offering insight into the wide range of career options in the performance industry. We are passionate about supporting young people in their education and career pursuits and grateful to the donors who enable us to do so in such a meaningful way.'



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